

Instructor: Robert B. Ray

Office: 4217 Turlington

Office Hours: Tuesday: 3:00-4:00 PM
Thursday: 4:00-6:00 PM

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Class Meetings: Tuesday: 1:55-2:45 PM
Thursday: 1:55-3:50 PM Turlington 2334

Film Screening: Monday: 4:05-7:05 PM Rolfs 115

Textbooks, in order of use:

Taylor: *The Principles of Scientific Management*

Schatz: *The Genius of the System*

Stern: *Hitler: The Führer and the People*

Harmetz: *The Making of Casablanca*

Hillier: *Cahiers du Cinéma: The 1950s*

Photocopies (marked *) available at Xerographic Copy Center,
927 NW 13th Street (375-0797)

Assignments and Grading:

I. 60% of the final grade will result from two written projects:

1. a mid-term exam, given on 8 October (Tuesday) and 10 October (Thursday)
2. a final exam, given on 2 December (Monday) and 3 December (Tuesday)

II. 40% of the final grade will result from the following:

1. class participation (quality as well as quantity)
2. brief, short-answer daily quizzes on reading assignments and films (lowest 20% dropped)

Note 1: You must score at least 90 on one of the two written exams to get an A or A- in the course.

Note 2: Classroom work determines 40% of the final grade. If you do not like to attend class, do regular reading assignments, and have participation required of you, you should either not take this class or settle for a grade lower than your written work might otherwise warrant.

Note 3: I will give the daily reading quiz at the beginning of class. If you come late to class, you will miss it.

Note 4: A few protocols: no hats, laptops, or cellphones in class. Please do not start packing up your belongings until the class session has finished.

III. Attendance: You are allowed two unexcused absences. Each additional absence on a Tuesday will subtract 4 points from your final course grade; a Thursday absence will cost 7 points. If you arrive significantly late or leave after the break on Thursday, you will lose 3 points.

In the sixteenth century, an Italian named Giulio Camillo constructed an object that became the talk of Western Europe. He called his work “The Memory Theater,” and he took it on tours of Venice and Paris, where he announced that he would reveal his building’s secret to only one person, the King of France, and only in a book, which he promised. Camillo, however, never completed the book, leaving behind only his theater, a wooden model, large enough to admit at least two people at once.

Camillo’s theater was, in fact, another version of a memory system, first described by the Roman writer Cicero, a mnemonic technique that links ideas or topics to specific places or objects. Cicero’s account connects this technique’s origins to treachery and catastrophe: invited by a nobleman to recite at a banquet, a poet named Simonides, having completed his oration, was told by his host that he would receive only half the agreed-upon payment for his work. A few minutes later, a message arrived for Simonides: two men were waiting outside to see him. He left the table and went out, but found no one. In his absence, the roof of the banquet hall collapsed, crushing the host and the remaining guests, so mangling the corpses as to leave them unidentifiable, even by relatives. Simonides, however, remembering the places where the guests had been sitting, was able to indicate to the mourners which were their dead. In Cicero’s words:

He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wished to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a wax writing-tablet and the letters written on it.

This course asks you to use the movie *Casablanca* as a memory theater for storing and recalling (1) the events of the 1930s, especially the two that will concern us – the consolidation of the Hollywood studio system and the rise of German fascism; and (2) the course of post-War cinematic history, especially American *film noir*, Italian neorealism, and the French New Wave.

After beginning with two films with German origins, Fritz Lang’s *M* and MGM’s *Grand Hotel*, the course’s first half will trace the parallel developments in Hollywood and Europe, using the biography and writings of Walter Benjamin as an allegory of popular culture’s appeal and Naziism’s danger. Part I ends with the Fall of Paris, both the historical event (which drove Benjamin further into a fatal exile) and its Hollywood representation (in *Casablanca*). Part II traces the two roads that diverge from that moment: the *film noir* of movies like *In a Lonely Place* and the neorealist rejection of Hollywood Cinema. These two filmmaking practices, apparently so contradictory, converge in the French New Wave, whose most famous movie, Jean-Luc Godard’s *Breathless*, explicitly invokes the image of Humphrey Bogart, the star of *Casablanca*.

PART I – FROM HITLER TO CASABLANCA

Aug. 20 (Tues.): **Introduction**

Jan. 22 (Thurs.): **Warner Brothers and the Backstage Musical**

42nd Street (1933: Lloyd Bacon; 89 minutes) [In-class film screening.]

- Aug. 27 (Tues.): **The Gospel of Efficiency**
 Taylor: *The Principles of Scientific Management*, pp. 5-48, 59-71, 77-97, 117-118, 126-128, 130 (84 pages)
- Aug. 29 (Thurs.): **Mechanization Takes Command: Fordism**
 *Batchelor: *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, pp. 1-6, 13-37, 39-63, 66-70 (40 pages)
- Sept. 3 (Tues.): **The Culture Factory: Hollywood's Studio System**
 Schatz: *The Genius of the System*, pp. 3-66 (64 pages)
- Sept. 5 (Thurs.): **Warner Brothers and MGM**
 Schatz: *The Genius of the System*, pp. 98-124, 135-175 (68 pages)
- Sept. 10 (Tues.): **Germany in the 1930s: Hitler**
 Stern: *Hitler: The Führer and the People*, pp. 1-53, 64-82 (72 pages)
- Sept. 12 (Thurs.): **Aesthetics and Politics in Germany: Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht**
 *Benjamin: from *Illuminations*, pp. 217-251 ["The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"] (35 pages)
 *Brecht: from *Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 33-49 ["The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre"; "The Literarization of the Theatre"; "The Film, the Novel and Epic Theatre"] (17 pages)
- Sept. 17 (Tues.): **French "Poetic Realism" and Jean Renoir**
 *Brady: from *Jean Renoir*, pp. 194-218 ["Biographical Sketch"] (25 pages)
 *Bergan: from *Jean Renoir*, pp. 205-206 (2 pages)
 *Renoir: from *Renoir on Renoir*, pp. 168-210, 227-229, 232-233, 236-239 ["Jean Renoir the boss"] (42 pages)
- Sept. 19 (Thurs.): **Renoir and the Archive**
 *Roud: *A Passion for Films: Henri Langlois and the Cinémathèque Française*, pp. xxiii-57 (63 pages)
- Sept. 24 (Tues.): **Renoir, Continued**
 *Burch: "Chance and Its Functions," from *Theory of Film Practice*, pp. 105-121 (17 pages)
- Sept. 26 (Thurs.): **Hollywood in the 1930s and Warner Brothers in the 1940s**
 Schatz: *The Genius of the System*, pp. 199-227, 252-270, 297-314 (65 pages)
- Oct. 1 (Tues.): **Everyone Comes to Rick's – Casablanca I**
 Schatz: *The Genius of the System*, pp. 314-321 (8 pages)

- Harmetz: *The Making of Casablanca*, pp. 3-100 (98 pages)
- Oct. 3 (Thurs.): **Casablanca II**
Harmetz: *The Making of Casablanca*, pp. 102-283 (182 pages)
- Oct. 8 (Tues.): **Mid-Term Exam Part I**
- Oct. 10 (Thurs.): **Mid-Term Exam Part II**

PART II – FILM NOIR AND NEOREALISM TO BREATHLESS

- Oct. 15 (Tues.): **Film Noir**
Schatz: *The Genius of the System*, pp. 411-439 (29 pages)
*Cook: from *A History of Narrative Film*, pp. 464-479 (16 pages)
*Vernet: “*Film Noir on the Edge of Doom*” (31 pages)
It’s a Wonderful Life (1946: Frank Capra; 129 minutes) (See by this date.)
Love Finds Andy Hardy (1938: George B. Seitz; 90 minutes) (Recommended to see by this date.)
- Oct. 17 (Thurs.): **Film Noir and Existentialism**
*Sartre: “Existentialism is a Humanism” (25 pages)
- Oct. 22 (Tues.): **Italian Neorealism: The Manifesto**
*Cook: from *A History of Narrative Film*, pp. 437-456 (20 pages)
*Overbey: from *Springtime in Italy: A Reader on Neo-Realism*, pp. 1-33
[“Introduction”] (33 pages)
*Zavattini: “A Thesis on Neo-Realism” (12 pages)
- Oct. 24 (Thurs.): **Italian Neorealism, Continued**
Hillier: *Cahiers du Cinéma – The 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, pp. 175-178, 180-181, 192-203, 206-207, 209-214 (26 pages)
- Oct. 29 (Tues.): **The Bicycle Thieves**
*Bazin: “*Bicycle Thief*” (14 pages)
- Oct. 31 (Thurs.): **Truffaut and La Politique des Auteurs**
*Truffaut: “A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema” (14 pages)
*Truffaut: from *The Early Film Criticism of François Truffaut*, pp. 73, 85-87, 154 (5 pages)
Hillier: *Cahiers du Cinéma – The 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, pp. 1-14, 21-30, 51 (25 pages)
- Nov. 5 (Tues.): **La Nouvelle Vague [The New Wave]**

Hillier: *Cahiers du Cinéma – The 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, pp. 73-83, 98-101, 116-119, 221-225, 248-258, 284-288 (40 pages)

Nov. 7 (Thurs.): **Godard I**

- *Godard: Three Interviews about *Breathless* (6 pages)
- *Godard: “Interview with Jean-Luc Godard” (26 pages)
- *Godard: “*Pierrot* my friend” (3 pages)
- *Godard: “Let’s Talk about *Pierrot*” (19 pages)
- *Godard: “Speech delivered at the Cinémathèque Française” (4 pages)
- *Godard: “One Should Put Everything into a Film” (2 pages)

Nov. 12 (Tues.): **Truffaut**

- *Davis: “Interview with François Truffaut” (10 pages)
- *Baby: “I Wanted to Treat *Shoot the Piano Player* like a Tale by Perrault” (2 pages)
- *Truffaut: “Adopting *Shoot the Piano Player*” (3 pages)

Nov. 14 (Thurs.): **Godard and Truffaut, continued**

Nov. 19 (Tues.): **Godard III**

- *Wollen: “Godard and Counter Cinema: *Ven d’Est*” (13 pages)
- *Daix: “An Interview with Jean-Luc Godard” (14 pages)

Nov. 21 (Thurs.): **Godard IV**

No additional reading

Nov. 26 (Tues.): **No Class**

Dec. 2 (Mon.): **Final Exam Part I**

Dec. 3 (Tues.): **Final Exam Part II**

FILM SCREENINGS – PART I

Aug. 26 (Mon.): *Grand Hotel* (1932: Edmund Goulding; 113 minutes)

Sept. 2 (Mon): No Screening – Labor Day

Sept. 9 (Mon.): *M* (1931: Fritz Lang; 118 minutes)
Triumph of the Will (1935: Leni Riefenstahl) [Excerpts: 20 minutes]

Sept. 16 (Mon.): *Rules of the Game* (1939: Jean Renoir; 113 minutes)

Sept. 23 (Mon.): *Une Partie de Campagne* [*A Day in the Country*] (1946: Jean Renoir; 40 minutes)
The Maltese Falcon (1941: John Huston; 100 minutes)

Sept. 30 (Mon.): *Casablanca* (1942: Michael Curtiz; 102 minutes)

FILM SCREENINGS – PART II

Oct. 7 (Mon.): *In a Lonely Place* (1950: Nicholas Ray; 91 minutes)

Oct. 14 (Mon.): *The Narrow Margin* (1952: Richard Fleischer; 70 minutes)

Oct. 21 (Mon.): *Paisa* [sections 1 and 6] (1946: Roberto Rossellini; 40 minutes)
Rome, Open City (1945: Roberto Rossellini; 105 minutes)

Oct. 28 (Mon.): *The Bicycle Thieves* (1949: Vittorio De Sica; 90 minutes)
Les Mistons (1957: François Truffaut; 26 minutes)

Nov. 4 (Mon.): *Breathless* (1959: Jean-Luc Godard; 89 minutes)
Shoot the Piano Player (1960: François Truffaut; 81 minutes)

Nov. 11 (Mon.): No Screening – Veterans' Day

Nov. 18 (Mon.): *Masculine-Feminine* (1965: Jean-Luc Godard; 110 minutes)